



United States Air Force

# ONLINE news

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## NEWSBYTES

### Satellites weather storm

SCHRIEVER AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Initial indications show that the Leonids meteor storm did not adversely affect Air Force Space Command satellite constellations.

AFSPC officials are continuing to assess each satellite for any residual damage. As a matter of policy, AFSPC does not comment on the status of individual satellites.

This year marked what is likely to be the last in the 33-year cycle of the comet Tempel-Tuttle that produces what is commonly known as the Leonid meteor shower.

### Units TRANSform

The standard abbreviation for base-level Air Force transportation units has changed from TRNS to TRANS.

The change, approved by the Air Force Nov. 2, is also reflected in the Air Force address directory. According to Air Force officials, the change is an attempt to eliminate confusion between the transportation squadron and the standard abbreviation for Air Force training squadrons which is TRS.

# Basic changes

*Airman's death triggers service officials toward new procedures with trainees*

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas - Based on the findings of a report into the death of an Air Force trainee, service officials are recommending procedural changes during basic military training.

The Air Force released a report of investigation into the death of Airman Micah J. Schindler, citing the cause of death as heat-stroke complicated by overhydration.

Airman Schindler died Sept. 12, two days after he became seriously ill near the end of a 5.8-mile field march during basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"I offer my sincere sympathy to Micah



Image by U.S. Air Force

*Changes to basic training will help provide a safer learning environment for trainees like Brent Haney, pictured here.*

Schindler's family, friends and fellow trainees. We lost a fine young man," said Gen. Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton, commander of Air Education and Training Command.

"Part of our responsibility is to provide the safest training environment possible consistent with effective training," General Newton said. "This investigation found that our process

was not fully adequate and changes are being made to improve safety controls."

As a result of this incident, Air Force medical experts sought out recent studies on the subject of water intoxication and excessive water consumption. Water intoxi-

**Continued on Page 4**

# Air Force nabs top 10 fugitive missing since 1982

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. — Airman 1st Class Richard Wayne Ackerman, an Air Force fugitive for nearly two decades, was taken into custody Nov. 11 by members of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

Airman Ackerman is alleged to have taken flight to avoid prosecution by deserting in February

1982 while awaiting court-martial at Bitburg Air Base, Germany, for use, possession and distribution of controlled substances.

He was arrested in Columbia, Mo., and is currently in pre-trial confinement at Whiteman AFB, Mo., for desertion, possession and distribution of controlled substances, and providing false identification documentation.

AFOSI agents from Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, Offutt AFB, Neb., Scott AFB, Ill., and Whiteman AFB, participated in the subject's surveillance and arrest.

Local FBI and Boone County Sheriffs' Department officials assisted in the arrest.

In cooperation with the Air Force Personnel Center and other law enforcement agencies, AFOSI

is tailing and capturing airmen through its fugitive retrieval program. Since formalizing the program in August 1995, AFOSI has apprehended 30 Air Force fugitives for crimes ranging from attempted murder to indecent assault of a child, as well as narcotics manufacturing and distribution.

*This article available in its entirety online.*



## Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>. Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

### Enlisted pilots solution

In regards to the new aviator continuation pay program to stem the pilot exodus [Air Force restructures Aviator Continuation Pay, Nov. 17], there is a better solution: let enlisted members fly. It's such a simple solution, and we have already proven that we can learn and do anything. And we are definitely not in it for the money!

**Tech. Sgt. Wayne R. Argabright**  
Shaw AFB, S.C.

### Well-informed reading

It was refreshing to read the commentary by Brig. Gen. Norman Seip [Nov. 17] regarding the downward trend of enlistments and whether or not people should stay in blue. Instead of coming across as another trite cheerleading chant, his commentary outlined some simple facts to enable people of all ranks to make what will be some of the most important decisions of their lives. We need more senior leaders to address issues that affect us in similar fashion ... Thanks for including a commentary that today's intelligent young troops can read to help make an intelligent and informed decision.

**Gary J. Kunich**  
Aviano AB, Italy

### Career discussion

I appreciated Brig. Gen. [Norman] Seip's commentary ["Staying in or getting out," Nov. 17] regarding each individual's responsibility to make an informed decision. When it was my turn to

decide about remaining on active duty, some 20 years ago, I weighed all the facts and elected to separate. After three months out, I felt the need to remain attached to the Air Force, so I joined up with a nearby Air National Guard unit. I have never regretted this decision. The professionalism evident by the ANG has always been as high as the active force. With the increased use of the ANG and Air Force Reserve to assist the active force throughout the world, I feel I get the best of both worlds (civilian and military). If you elect to separate from active duty, consider the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve. You can keep your skills in practice and continue to feel rewarded by being a part of a professional team.

**Senior Master Sgt. David Morrison**  
Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif.

### No one to blame but self

In response to "Pay table hard to swallow," [Nov 10], I find it really hard to fault the Air Force or anyone else for someone's failure to get promoted. As a master sergeant with less than 14 years in the Air Force, I can unequivocally state that promotion doesn't come without a price. The significance of the price is up to each individual; however, sacrifices must be made to achieve a goal. If one wants to sit back and blame the system or his or her lack of testing ability to justify non-selection for promotion, then so be it ... Using about one-fourth of those 1,500-plus days remaining to retirement might just pay off with a promotion and a higher retirement check.

**Master Sgt. Thomas Young**  
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

## Thanksgiving offers time to reflect

by **F. Whitten Peters**  
Secretary of the Air Force and  
**Gen. Michael E. Ryan**  
Air Force chief of staff

As Americans, our great fortune is to live in a country full of hope and prosperity — a country that promises liberty for all of its citizens. Traditionally, we have set aside Thanksgiving as a day to celebrate the many blessings we enjoy as people of this great nation. Like those who began this tradition, our Armed Forces continue to proudly carry the torch of freedom.

Thanksgiving commemorates the

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*... our Armed Forces  
continue to proudly carry  
the torch of freedom.*

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Pilgrims' first harvest more than three centuries ago after traveling to a distant and unknown land in pursuit of an ideal. They held that historic feast to give thanks for the peace, prosperity and religious freedom they found in the "New World."

As we gather this Thanksgiving, let us reflect on the blessings we enjoy today and acknowledge the selflessness of the

men and women of our Air Force in assuring our security and freedom. Again this year, nearly 90,000 Air Force members are stationed or deployed overseas, many separated from family and friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their loved ones as they perform their vital missions.

To all the members of our great Air Force - active duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian and retired, and your families — thank you for your dedication and commitment. We salute you for continuing our rich legacy of service and for upholding the ideals of democracy. Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving.



# Giving Thanks

## Thanksgiving remains traditional for deployed airmen

By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — Turkey, dressing, candied yams, cranberry sauce, and football.

With nearly 9,000 personnel deployed worldwide during the holiday season, Air Force members find ways to bring traditional American celebrations to their foreign surroundings.

At Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, a traditional Thanksgiving feast is pre-empted by the annual Turkey Bowl flag football championships where the Air Force defends its title against the Army in head-to-head competition the day before Thanksgiving. Marine General Charles E. Wilhelm, Commander in Chief, Southern Command, will attend the game.

At Operation Northern Watch in Southern Turkey, sports events and social gatherings with coalition personnel from the United

Kingdom and Turkish Air Force will be part of holiday activities.

Thanksgiving Day at both Joint Task Force Bravo and Operation Northern Watch will begin with prayer services at the base chapels, and is followed by traditional feasts provided by their respective dining facilities.

Finally, deployed personnel at both locations can be part of the Thanksgiving week festivities back at home through morale calls, free electronic mail and teleconferencing services provided by their family support



Senior Airman Brett Marsden, a patrolman assigned to Joint Security Forces at Soto Cano Air Base Honduras, prepares for a joint patrol with Honduran Army Cpl. Juan Argueta.

centers.

"I'm going to miss being away from my family, but being away from our families during the holidays is part of

being in the Air Force," said Senior Airman Brett Marsden, a patrolman for the Joint Security Forces at Soto Cano.

## Personnel system goes total force

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — In a little more than a year, military personnel flights throughout the Air Force, Air National Guard and Reserve will begin using state-of-the-art technology to process "total force" personnel information.

The Air Force Military Personnel Data System Modernization program, or MilMod, will replace the current 1970's technology with a relational database using the Oracle Human Resources software. It's been more than 20 years since the last ma-

jor update.

"We've been working hard for nearly four years building this modernized system to take Air Force personnel processing into the next century," said Lt. Col. Ed Oliver, MilMod program manager at the Air Force Personnel Center here. "Now we're in the final stretch and we are building the world's largest — and we think the best — human resource system."

This new system will support all "life cycle" personnel management functions from recruit-

ing through job assignment and ultimately separation or retirement.

In December 2000, after a successful six-month formal testing period, the current legacy system will be turned off and the modernized system will become the system of record for all active duty, Guard, and Reserve personnel processing.

"We're building the modernized system to support the core personnel mission, with no bells and whistles," said Colonel Oliver.

However, the new system has several inherent improvements over today's system. The most apparent improvement is the graphical user interface, which will give personnel technicians online, real-time access to personnel information.

"We've also standardized the support we're providing to the total force," he added. "This will improve system support to the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve personnel processes."

*This article available in its entirety online.*





## Basic changes

Continued from Page 1

cation and the resulting low blood sodium levels lead to an increased tendency for internal organs, such as the brain and lungs, to rapidly absorb the excess water and swell. This phenomenon played a critical role in the death of Airman Schindler, according to the investigation.

The investigation also examined other field training practices with the objective of preventing loss of life or serious illness in the future. This was the basis for the investigating officer's recommendation for procedural changes during basic military training. They include:

- increased instruction on heat related illness symptoms and the risks of over hydration

- better procedures to help training instructors and medical personnel monitor the medical status of trainees

- increased efforts to encourage trainees to identify personal or fellow trainee problems and automatic removal of trainees from field exercises for certain medical symptoms.

General Newton added that the 5.8 mile march has been moved to earlier in the day, as part of scheduling changes made for Warrior Week training. This will lessen the risk of heat illness by avoiding the hottest part of the day.

The investigation included interviews and statements from instructors, medics and many of the trainees who participated in the field march, as well as other medical and military training officials. This investigation was completed with the objective of discovering and documenting all of the facts surrounding Airman Schindler's death.

As with similar accident or incident inquiries conducted by the Air Force, AETC officials said a follow-on investigation will be conducted into the issue of personal responsibility concerning the death.

## Pay exception flies with AF

WASHINGTON — The Air Force has received approval for a Special Duty Assignment Pay save pay exception to the Career Enlisted Flyer Incentive Pay program.

The save pay option, which begins Dec. 1 and lasts through February 2003, offsets any drop in overall special and incentive pay for airmen transitioning to CEFIP, until such time as CEFIP equals or exceeds the combined amount of S&I pay being received for flying duty.

The SDAP exception is in addition to the Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay save pay provision which is already in effect for those members eligible to receive CEFIP payments.

Under the SDAP exception to policy, all SDAP offset payments end after (1) 36 months; (2) CEFIP equals or exceeds the HDIP plus SDAP amount received; or (3)



image by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

reassignment of the member from the duty assignment; whichever occurs first.

Beginning Jan. 31, no new members eligible for CEFIP will be authorized SDAP and existing SDAP will be paid at the appropriate offset rate.

*This article available in its entirety online.*

## Reports fine tune relations

WASHINGTON - Air Force officials anticipate recently released reports will help the service fine tune and ensure human relations programs are on track.

Two Department of Defense reports, concerning the equal opportunity climate and career progression of minority and women officers serving on active duty, were released Nov. 23.

Air Force senior officials plan to work with the secretary of defense and the other services to explore the data for a greater understanding of how equal opportunity relates to overall mission readiness.

Officials also expect the reports to help the Air Force target equal opportunity and human relations programs to ensure the right concerns are being

addressed.

"Equal opportunity and treatment are essential functions of leadership and command," said Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff. "Our policy on this subject is straightforward and based on Air Force ideals of fairness, dignity and justice in the treatment of our most important resource — our people."

The Air Force provides ongoing instruction beginning in basic military training and all commissioning sources, as well as at all levels of professional military education.

Further information regarding the results of the reports will be released by the Air Force as it becomes available.

Both reports are at <http://dticaw.dtic.mil/prhome>.



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